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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PHUM PGOV PREF IS ICRC GTIP ISRAEL RELATIONS

SUBJECT: OLMERT'S COS ON VISIT PREPARATIONS, AMA, MDA, AND ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones; Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

1. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador and DCM on June 18, PM Olmert's chief of staff, Yoram Turbowicz, described the main goal of Olmert's upcoming visit to Washington as building trust and getting to better know the President. According to Turbowicz, he, Dov Weissglas, and Shalom Tourgeman conducted "candid and open discussions" on the full range of bilateral and international issues during advance talks in Washington on May 15-16. Turbowicz maintained that "Iran is an existential threat to the world," particularly Israel. Despite the Israeli public's preoccupation with other issues and the fact that they are used to living under constant threat, he urged prompt action to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. He revealed that Olmert does not plan to raise specific economic issues, adding that a GOI proposal to discuss joint development of alternate energy sources had been dropped to maintain focus on the major issues.

2. (C) The Ambassador raised a number of other issues that remain important, although they are unlikely to come up during Olmert's visit:

-- Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA): Reiterating points already made with several GOI cabinet ministers, the Ambassador urged the GOI to name participants for a security working group meeting that USSC LTG Dayton has proposed for June 7. He also stressed that the EU Border Assistance Mission requires Israeli agreement to the customs protocol to better control the flow of goods at Rafah.

-- Anti-trafficking efforts: Noting that he had raised this issue with Weissglas, FM Livni, Justice Minister Ramon, DefMin Peretz and others, the Ambassador requested that the GOI expeditiously approve pending legislation to criminalize trafficking in labor. Turbowicz replied that Olmert had already made clear that he expected the government to "do much more" to combat trafficking and to fully enforce the law. Turbowicz welcomed the USG's focus on preventing trafficking, said that the GOI would take the necessary steps because they are in Israel's own interests, and claimed that trafficking from the Sinai remains a problem.

-- Magen David Adom (MDA): The Ambassador urged the GOI to take the necessary steps to facilitate the MDA's accession to the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. He added that there are still a number of issues remaining on internal MDA reform and from the MDA-Palestinian Red Crescent MOU that need to be resolved prior to the June 20-21 meeting in Geneva, and preferably prior to a compliance assessment visit on May 31. Having made similar points with FM Livni and others, the Ambassador stressed the importance of making progress on this issue, which has been an Israeli and American priority for decades. Turbowicz replied that he was unfamiliar with the details of the MDA question, but would check on the status.

3. (C) Bio notes and Turbowicz's views on coalition dynamics are reported septel.

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